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[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] was dawning in the quiet of the early morning. A stillness so pronounced that we could feel it surrounded us in the base camp, for at Cantwa the drums had been replaced in the shrines of the gods for whom they speak, and no more guns saluted the spirit of Zimbi, or warned away the evil dead with the powder which was distasteful to ghosts. Zimbi was buried, the grave diggers had bathed and put on fresh bis cloths, the village had been purified, and all was still.

From our shelter, awaiting the base lift, we could see that the river had fallen; the ringed grasses on the bank showed fully a hand's breadth of fresh brown that had the day before been under water. With the coming of the sun things began to stir. The lizards appeared, the chickens came to peck at our shoes, looking for crumbs, and boys began to make shadows across the opposite bank, as the Cantwa women in their small corials went to their fields. At the bow would be a little girl, or a pot smaller boy—as young as four perhaps, for the older ones were with the men to learn a man's work—helping to take the boat up the last water. All this went on quietly, until we espied three boats coming down the rapids and pointing about in the still water toward our landing place. As they came nearer, we could see that the boats carried no load, and our host, the director of the latex-collecting station, explained that those boats were new and were being taken down river to [illegible].

"All the large boats come from top-side," he said. "The men take them down around to the Mbororyan River by way of the canals and then carry loads in them to the stations in the interior. The Mbororyan men are fine canoemen. They like them on the Mbororyan. . . . You could see a large boat for your trip up river. Maybe the men will sell one."

The man in charge of the little fleet stood more than six feet tall. His face was intensely sheltered, and he carried himself with a dignity and reserve that surprised even the men of the village chiefs.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

more than a year before her father's death and therefore had not served her mother from morning.

"My sons are big men," she showed, pointing to the mortar, "and already my brother takes them with him down the river, and when they are with him he tells them about the cranes and the cows, and where the villages are which are friendly to our people. But when they come here to see me, then they play. They have play guns and play arrows which they make themselves. Into the enclosed bush they shoot them until I call them away to eat. Here I have no men from whom they can learn. Here they only play."

But boys liked to be with men. When the rains came, her brother would let them sit by what he carved, and, seeing him work, they would take up a knife and begin whittling. That was how boys learned to do men's work.

Women children played with "guns." She put down her pestle, and left alone in her cloth where the child slept, and brought out a gourd, something to size a small cucumber. It had beads on top for eyes and a few left over to indicate nose and mouth, while above the eyes was coarse string for the hair. Until girls were old enough to be of use in the fields, they sat about in the clearing playing with these dolls.

"When they are four and five, then they like to work."

There was, of course, dancing. All dances were opened by the children, and at six and seven the girls knew when and where, and backwards, and the boys danced men.

"Do you dance men?" we asked the Grandma's five-year-old grandson, who was standing with us beside the widow.

"Yo," he said, but once our attention was turned to him he said also, "White man, the children say you carry money in this." He touched a metal camera which hung from the stranger's belt. "I know it is money."

He knew also that shaving cream was soap, and not white people's sacred clay, and now as women came with berries for the white man's wine—a name they gave

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

WOMEN AT WORK

"I will spoil, sir"—She is playing the spirit," his father said, laughing, and a woman who stood by said that when he grew up he would have an important god. It would be a good god, too, and it might be a great Komito—a priest extraordinary to him.

Among the little girls who were with us were three, and one stood by with Tsukumi's grandson, were the two daughters of Shita, the wife of Chief Asafu of Ifa, who were about the Grammar's village with white on her face and body. The little girls were also washed in the white clay, and there was white in the wool of their hair. They had the quick, excited movements of their mother, and one of them in particular was a nervous child, shy and easily frightened. She never came too close to the strangers, and, for a time, if they had caught her eye, she would begin to tremble with fear.

"Your daughters are handsome, Shita."

"Ah, they come from a good line," she said, laughing.

The Grammar's younger wife said, "They will have many gods when they are big. They will have them from their mother, and there will be strange yes. They are twins."

It was possible, she explained, by looking at a child to know if it would have the gods of the family. Sometimes the gods talk a dislike to a child and refused to give it of their wisdom or protection, and sometimes the gods liked it so well that they gave it many gifts—the gift of a fine singing voice, the ability to dance better than others, and the great fortune to be liked.

"Until they are grown, the gods do not confide their work," she added. "But we in the bush know a child who will have important gods, and we know if the gods will be kindly."

"Do you mean you know because of form?"

"Ah-ha, all gods do not come from home."

9

One day when sitting among the women, the talk was of twins.

[illegible]

He promised readily enough to go with us, but Bayo told us later that he would not come.

"He says the white doctor cannot do more than [illegible] can do. He says a man must take what [illegible] brings."

"Is there no white against [illegible]?" we asked of Bayo.

"Oh, but [illegible] is not greater than white. It is something else. When the Sky God gave [illegible] to man, he gave it to help man live, not to help him do bad things. When men and women earn a [illegible] for their family, it is because they [illegible] what is hateful to the great gods and ancestors. [illegible] was not sent to save men from punishment."

"Does white never punish, Bayo?" We were thinking of what he said about his own [illegible], of how [illegible] helped him, he destroyed things.

But he would say no more. "I am too young, Bwii's, to speak of these things. In my age I know only a little [illegible] I can speak with the old men."

6

The conversation led on one day to the [illegible] men on the river. They were, we knew, important persons in the Bush Negro communities. An [illegible] man of reputation was not only consulted by his own villagers and clansmen, but men and women came to him from distant villages, when those who were nearer had failed them. It occurred sometimes that even from the [illegible] villages on the lower river, [illegible] who [illegible] were sought out—perhaps this was because of the same tradition which encouraged the buying of strange gods to enlarge the family pantheon, perhaps it was because of something which touched still deeper beliefs.

How did a man become an [illegible] man?

From what we had already heard, it was apparent that here was something which approached the formal education of our own civilization, a form of education, indeed, which we pride ourselves is unique to our own way of life.

All other knowledge the Bush Negro child gains by being always with members of his family who are busy at

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

the tasks which will fall to his lot when he reaches adulthood. Half in play, the boys and girls help their elders and in that way learn how to work, how to conduct themselves, how to sing and dance, how to make observations, and how to pray to the gods. What they learn when they come by their gods is also taught them by members of their family. A boy's father and maternal uncle instruct him in the gods they give him. A girl is made familiar with the will of her gods and their manner of wooing when her mother and her mother's sisters give their gods to her. Knowledge is, therefore, shared in the family, and much of it, the Dusk Negro says, comes to each individual from his gods, since not every boy who receives a fine carver can rival the carving of his teacher. When he does show promise of excellence at a given task, it is because he, too, has a god who helps him do his carving. It is the same with drumming, and singing, and telling stories, and making love.

But this is learned formally and slowly. An ebia man may teach his own brother, or his sister's eldest son, or his own son, even, when he knows, but the learning process will be gradual, for no man may disclose too much to an untrained mind. At times, however, an ebia man takes men who are not related to him. He may himself decide upon a young man of promise to whom he cares to impart his knowledge. A considerable sum of money may be offered him by members of an influential family who wish to have an ebia man of their own kin and who send a young man to him for training. In a dream or during possession it may become known that the ancestors wish a certain young man to apprentice himself to the ebia man they name.

The apprenticeship lasts from three months to a year. The novice goes to live with the ebia man, working with him and observing all that his master does. During the period of intensive training he goes with the ebia man into the bush and is shown the herbs which heal. He is trained in the manner of healing for the ill or the evil-

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] and how to cure fever, and boils. He is shown how to make [illegible] medicine for babies of the skin, and for colds, and for diseases of children. He is taught the protective obias for the women who conceives, and those which help conception, the obias which keep people safe on the river, and those which guard them in the bush against enemy spirits.

It may be, too, that during this first period of training, the initiate is shown how to trap and coax the snakes from which the snake "cotton" is made. This cure for snake bite is known to Europeans among Bush Negroes and whites alike, but the secret of preparing the cotton is known to the Bush Negroes alone.

While the young man is in training, he may not go with a woman, and there are many more prohibitions which he must observe.

"Not all men can become obia men."

"Does a man need obia in order to have [illegible]?" we asked.

"To have Obia [illegible], yes. Now do not ask about [illegible], white man," said Boyo's uncle with a smile. "Only a [illegible] man knows about [illegible]. Do not ask, because I cannot tell you."

2

Obia and women constantly drifted in and have come with carvings for our collection. Many brought us obias. Some of these obias they took from their persons and sold to us, but others were newly made for us, for some of them themselves were, they would not part with, whatever the inducement.

"Why do you want my obia, white man?" a Bush Negro asked one day. "Do you want an obia to carry you safe to your country? I will make one for you, but do not ask for mine. Obia has kept me in good health. I cannot give away an obia which has served me well. The spirits would be angered."

He returned after a day with one which resembled his own, and as he gave it, he placed it on the upturned palms

A. Kaba D-1 (1922-1934) 1931
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were born, such as Monday-child, Tuesday-child, and so on.

The boys of about seven to ten years of age form themselves into groups and play at hunting or fishing, or canoe in and out of the village. There seems to be very little organized game playing among the children. For that matter, the adults have no organized games aside from that of gambling with the *adji-boro* board. The little girls play at house making, or follow pursuits of a less arduous nature than do the boys, and to them in particular is given the care of the young children, although the boys often do their share in this matter. The arts of hunting, fishing, canoe work, and jungle craft in general are usually taught the boy by his maternal uncle, or by some other male relative of his mother's family, and less often by his actual father. As irregular intervals there are canoe races, and the young men indulge in wrestling as a pastime.

We know of no initiatory rites for ceremonially admitting children into the tribe or puberty. Among the Aucaners, however, the boy does undergo a slight ceremonial to indicate that he is at last a full-fledged adult. Most of the children of both sexes are entirely nude, and no notice is taken of the fact. At about the age of ten the boy begins wearing around his waist a string of singouni, in anticipation of a loin-cloth. When the maternal uncle judges that the boy is old enough, he stands the boy up before the entire village, assembled for the purpose, and gives him a loin-cloth and carnisa. But few the uncle rips off any cloth that happens to be on the boy's body and draws attention to his nudity. Everyone is told to

[illegible]

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[illegible] ii) They show the continuity and stability of the numbers of the Refugee Blocks. The proportion of boys and girls brought up by the mother, the paternal grandmother, the father, etc., is noticeably constant from one generation to the other. There is no tendency for the proportion of children raised by the father to increase; it even seems to decrease, which may be related to the increasing instability of marriages. In fact, in spite of European influences, no evolution is observed toward patrilineal structures among the Refugee Blocks.

[illegible] iii) The fact that part of the children are raised outside of their own lineage has two consequences: for the unity of the groups for most of them, when their education is finished, came to settle down in one of the villages belonging to their lineage.

Of 89 men born before 1938, 28 were raised outside their lineage; 21 of them came back to [illegible] only seven, or less than 8 per cent, settled down in other lineages.

Of 78 women born before 1938, 12 were raised outside their lineage, of whom only four, or 5 per cent, settled permanently outside their group.

[illegible] Education of children. If the education of girls does not necessitate a difficult apprenticeship, it is not the same for boys; the sum of knowledge that /1.02/ a Refugee Block must possess to carry out effectively the activities of his group is considerable. In particular, he must:

—Know more than 200 kinds of trees with their uses, the way to fell them, the way to work their wood;

—Be capable of constructing boats of at least 10 tons (1,000 kilograms of load). This technique alone requires several years of apprenticeship;

—Acquire sufficient knowledge of carpenter work to build his house and that of his wife;

—Learn how to handle boats on the river and the techniques of navigation.

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To this traditional knowledge, which remains indispensable, has been added for the past several years substantial knowledge of mechanics, because the use of outboard motors is becoming more and more common; this knowledge is transmitted in empirical fashion as it has been acquired. It must be recorded that the motors go and that they are well kept up.

The system of education employed by the Refugee Blacks is rarely effective; their children are excessively turbulent and very difficult when they are in a group. When they are divided up individually in the midst of adults, they are placed under the best conditions for learning the techniques and traditions of their group.

The person charged with the education of a child does not willingly entrust him to another and takes him along wherever he moves. However, by concern for propriety, the woman guardian sends the children she is raising to sleep in other houses on the days when her husband comes to visit her. Boys go to sleep at the home of a brother, an uncle, a comrade; the same for girls who have not yet reached puberty; but it is not the same for girls who have reached puberty; they are subjected to strict supervision.

This is one of the reasons why the Boni find it repugnant to put their children in school (French school of Maripasoula, Surinam school of Kaniko). Without wishing to tackle here this sad problem in its fullest extent, we must state that this teaching, entirely inappropriate and dispensed by teachers who look down on the Refugee Blacks, has results nearly similar to those observed generally in Africa, the main one being to make the children strangers to their own families and misfits in their own country. There is practically no example of a case where the Boni nation has benefited from having one of its children go to school. If the child succeeds, he leaves for Paramaribo and never comes back again. If he fails, he then has much more

/132 cont./

C48 87 152 difficulty in learning the techniques of his group, for the years when the mind is most pliant have been lost in this regard; as for the knowledge acquired at school, it is so foreign to the life of the Refugee Blacks that at the end of a few years none of it remains except vague smatterings.

861 In general, the process of education employed among the Refugee Blacks is imitation of the adult. A child is rarely given a lesson as such. He sees something done, he tries on his own • 868 initiative, and little by little he learns. For example, /133/ he sees his guardian make a boat; he is simply asked to go and get dry palm branches and to take away the chips; he hears the adults discuss the job as it goes on. At about the age of 12 or 13 he tries to make a first boat for himself with the help of an older camrade. He progressively acquires knowledge of this technique.

561 462 Boys begin to take part in farm work from the age of six or seven, principally weeding and planting. At about ten or eleven they begin to handle the machete and help to cut through the bush; at about 12 they begin to handle the axe and learn to fell trees. At 14 or 15 they begin to make small boats. An adolescent of 16 or 17 is in general capable of cutting a clearing for his mother or sister.

429 86 Most often the guardian takes his role very seriously, giving his main attention to teaching the child all that is necessary. If it is a woman, she asks her brothers to teach the techniques of boating and building.

86 461 834 [891] The principle is to develop very early a sense of responsibility in the child by making it progressively necessary for him to earn his living. The guardian does not furnish pocket money, and with the exception of a hammock every other year, no manufactured objects (children under 11-12 years not being clothed, he has almost no expenses for clothing). But he gives the child progressively chances to earn money by his work. From ten years on, the child begins to render some services: for example for the construction of a boat, he helps transport the dry palm branches intended for the burning. If the boat is being

/133 cont./

866 461 434 made for sale, the guardian gives him a small sum out of the money gained. At 14 an adolescent begins to satisfy nearly all his own needs.

883 465 For example, from June to December, 1956, Tasa (14 years), son of Fintiman (Bonivilie) had earned about 13,000 francs:

June	helped his father build a large boat for the administration (45 days)	6,000
October	went to Saint-Laurent as auxiliary bosman .	3,000
December	helped convoy a boat of the border-fixing mission sent back empty to Maripasoula . .	4,000
		13,000

882 868 His father, entrusted with his education, let him use this money in his own way; he pointed out to us with pride that for the first time in 1956 his son had been able to satisfy all his own needs, but that it was important to keep him under a firm hand until he was capable of doing a man's work alone: for that, five or six years of apprenticeship would not be too much.

868 561 [153] [582] [178] In fact, many times we had the chance to verify it, it is in this prolonged apprenticeship that are developed the seriousness of mind and the technical skill so remarkable among the Refugee Blacks. At 20 years, most of them still do not know how to do anything worthwhile, and it is scarcely before 25 or 27 that they become capable of /134/ painstaking work; in this respect the present tendency of the young boys toward precocious emancipation (the marriage age of men is going down to 20 and even 18 years) runs the risk of having very unfortunate consequences for the future of the Refugee Blacks.

429 [582] [583] The person charged with the education of a girl exercises the powers of a mother toward her. It is she who authorizes her to marry, and by giving her the pagi, married women's garment, gives her symbolically her freedom as a woman. It is to her that the first husband pays the price of the virginity of the girl.

/158 cont./

158 The Boni woman, poor in emotional feelings, and jealous of her independence with respect to men, puts her pride into subsisting by her own efforts.

178 [154] The young women, even the ones with the freest habits, stay firmly attached to their village, to their plantings, and to the mode of life they received from their grandmothers. In fact, because of its structure and customs, the society of the Refugee Blacks has much less likelihood of suffering from the poison spread by modern life than the patrilineal societies of Black Africa.

761 /159/ Death; Burial Rites

Death is for the Refugee Blacks an event of extreme gravity.

795 In order to ward off danger and permit the ɲɔ́nka of the dead person to take its place among the ancestors, the unstinting cooperation of everyone is required.

764 765 181 [621] The ceremonies which have to do with death and mourning are by far the most important ones in the day-to-day life of the Refugee Blacks; for each one they represent a very heavy material load which is accepted without recriminations. It is really a veritable mobilization, which takes place within the framework of the village and not of the lineage. The apparatus [619] set into motion is independent of the lineage, for it must function in the same way for an outsider, Djoka or Saramaka, who dies during a trip.

764 868 767 Participation in the burial rites is for all an essential religious duty. From childhood the Boni are prepared for this task and become, some of them kisimɛ̃ (coffin-makers), others ɔlɔmɛ̃ (grave-diggers), some others wasimɛ̃ (bathers of the dead).

767 467 Kisimɛ̃ and ɔlɔmɛ̃. It can be said that in each village, ɔlɔmɛ̃ and kisimɛ̃ constitute customary societies, provided with an organization and wielding veritable powers for the duration of their work.

/202 cont./

153 --Pupils are taught, individually or collectively, to dance
291 in the manner of the god. Indeed, each divinity has a charac-
297 teristic form of dance, which it executes sometimes by using
176 the bodies of its hearers when it comes into them. The pupil
535 must imitate as best he can the individual movements and the
[543] rhythm of this dance, while the teacher, using the appropriate drum, beats out the calling formulas.

If the god is satisfied with the student, he will be able to come into him.

291 These exercises appear to have as their goal the creation
297 in the pupils of forms of conditioned reflexes; they have nothing
785 in common with the very harsh ordeals which the medicine man
153 of the Guiana Indians imposes upon himself, and do not involve any form of asceticism. It does not seem that chastity, even temporary, is demanded of the student, any more than fasting or doing anything contrary to his inclinations.

287 The idea of a spiritual death and resurrection of the
291 possessed person, with all the ritual it entails: long seclusion of the neophytes, change of name of the one possessed, who is supposed to relearn all the activities of ordinary life, does not appear to have been kept by the Refugee Blacks. In a general [152] way, the atmosphere of solemn seriousness, /203/ of secrecy, and of fear, which characterize the Dahomey cults of possession is not found among them.

291 These lessons are always paid for and are even very
789 expensive. Payment is made in pieces of cloth, in demi-johns
435 of tafia.
[436] Having a Kumêtis amounted in 1958 to at least 25,000 francs. This payment is not only compensation for the teacher; [181] it is the mark of legitimacy. What has not been paid for is not, for the Refugee Blacks, legitimately acquired. We shall come back to this important point later.